

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCSE-00 H-02 CU-04 SSO-00 L-03 /020 W

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O 061130Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3169

UNCLAS COLOMBO 2437

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, CE (PUTTERMAN, JAYDIE)

SUBJ: CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN US STUDENT

REF: STATE 184922; SCS OPERATIONS MEMO DATED JULY 8.

1. FULL TEXT FOLLOWS OF AMB'S LETTER TO SENATOR JAVITS WHICH
WAS POUCHED ON JULY 31:

"YOUR INQUIRY REGARDING THE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS SURROUNDING
THE AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT OF MY JAYDIE PUTTERMAN, SON
OF MR AND MRS MICHEAL H. PUTTERMAN, 975 PARK AVE,
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10028, HAS BEEN FORWARDED TO THE
EMBASSY BY MR ROBERT MCLOSKEY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS, FOR REPLY.

SHORTLY AFTER THE ACCIDENT IN KANDY ON APRIL 21 IN
WHICH A 14-YEAR OLD CYCLIST SUFFERED FATAL INJURIES,
MY MAYDIE PUTTERMAN WAS IN CONTACT WITH THE EMBASSY'S
CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICER, MR RICHARD ROSS, WHO
HAPPENED TO BE IN KANDY AT THAT TIME. MR ROSS CONTACTED
THE EMBASSY'S CONSULAR OFFICER IN COLOMBO WHO ADVISED
MR PUTTERMAN TO COOPERATE AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE WITH
THE POLICE, COMPLETE THE REQUIRED REPORT ON THE ACCIDENT,
AND TO SEEK LEGAL ASSISTANCE WHEN IT BECAME NECESSARY.
THE CORONER'S INQUEST TOOK PLACE THE FOLLOWING DAY AND
MR PUTTERMAN WAS RELEASED ON MR ROSS'S RECOGNIZANCE.
A FEW DAYS LATER MR PUTTERMAN CAME TO COLOMBO TO SEE
THE CONSULAR OFFICER AND EXPLAINED WHAT HAD
HAPPENED. ON LEARNING THAT THE EMBASSY IS NOT PERMITTED
TO RECOMMEND A SPECIFIC LAWYER, MR PUTTERMAN TOOK THE
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ADVICE OF AN ACQUAINTANCE, MR BERNARD SOYSA, ACTING

MINISTER OF FINANCE, TO ENGAGE THE SERVICES OF MR DAYA R. PERERA, 15 SIRIPA LANE, COLOMBO 5, SRI LANKA. TEL: 83807, WHOM MR SOYSA HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. ONE OF MR PERERA'S REPS ATTENDED A ONE-MINUTE HEARING ON MAY 15 AT WHICH MR PUTTERMAN WAS CHARGED WITH CARELESS AND DANGEROUS DRIVING AT AN EXCESSIVE SPEED RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF GAMINI RATNAYAKE. MR PERERA HAS TOLD MR PUTTERMAN THAT HE PROBABLY WILL BE REQUIRED TO PAY A FINE OF PERHAPS 1,000 TO 2,000 RUPEES, PLUS COURT COSTS. (THE MAXIMUM PENALTIES UNDER CHAPTER 19, SECTION 298 OF THE CEYLON PENAL CODE WHICH INCLUDES MANSLAUGHTER AND HIT AND RUN DRIVING, PROVIDE FOR FINES UP TO 2,000 RUPEES AND/OR A PRISON SENTENCE OF UP TO 5 YEARS.) IN MR PUTTERMAN'S FAVOR, ARE THE FACTS THAT HE REMAINED AT THE SITE OF THE ACCIDENT, HELPED THE VICTIM SEEK MEDICAL ASSISTANCE, COMPLIED WITH ALL POLICE REQUIREMENTS, AND AIDED THE FAMILY WITH FUNERAL EXPENSES.

AT THE MAY 15 HEARING, MR PUTTERMAN, UPON THE ADVICE OF HIS LAWYER, PLEADED NOT GUILTY TO THE CHARGES WHICH HE CONSIDERED BOTH WRONG AND EXCESSIVE AND WAS RELEASED UPON PAYMENT OF 1,000 RUPEES BOND. A TRIAL DATE WAS SET FOR SEPT 10. MR PUTTERMAN HAS TOLD US THAT IN THE BEGINNING THERE HAD BEEN A POSSIBILITY THAT THE MATTER MIGHT BE SETTLED OUT OF COURT. HOWEVER, THIS SETTLEMENT DID NOT GO THROUGH AND WE UNDERSTAND THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT A CIVIL SUIT CLAIMING 200,000 RUPEES DAMAGES MAY BE INSTITUTED AGAINST MR PUTTERMAN. THIS WOULD NOT OCCUR, HOWEVER, UNTIL AFTER THE CRIMINAL CHARGES ARE HEARD. ONE RUPEE EQUALS \$0.09.

BOTH IN DISCUSSIONS BEFORE AND AFTER THE HEARING MR PUTTERMAN SPECIFICALLY INSTRUCTED THE EMBASSY NOT TO INFORM HIS PARENTS. MR PUTTERMAN RECENTLY INFORMED THE CONSULAR OFFICER THAT HE HAS TOLD HIS PARENTS OF HIS SITUATION.

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I WISH TO ASSURE YOU THAT AN AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICER WILL ATTEND MR PUTTERMAN'S TRIAL AND THAT THE EMBASSY WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO INSURE THAT MR PUTTERMAN IS GIVEN FAIR AND EQUAL TREATMENT UNDER SRI LANKA LAW. I WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THIS MATTER AND WILL, OF COURSE, INFORM YOU OF SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS."

2. MR PUTTERMAN WAS ALSO THE DRIVER IN AN AUTOMOBILE

ACCIDENT ON JUNE 6 IN COLOMBO. THERE WERE NO INJURIES
AND, AFTER REPORTING THE INCIDENT TO THE POLICE, THE
MATTER WAS SETTLED. PUTTERMAN HAS SINCE HIRED A DRIVER.
VAN HOLLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CITIZEN PROTECTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COLOMB02437
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750271-0170
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750875/aaaacnui.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 184922
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 DEC 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 DEC 2003 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <06 JAN 2004 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN US STUDENT
TAGS: CASC, CE, (PUTTERMAN, JAYDIE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006